ePortfolios and Peer-Mentoring: Putting the Whole in Holistic

Mercedes del Rosario, Ed.D.
Sada Jaman
Pablo Avila

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Holistic Learning

• Learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience.

• Student development, and the adaptation of learning to students’ lives and needs, are fundamental parts of engaged learning and liberal education.

• True liberal education requires the engagement of the “whole” student.
Prevailing Structure

• Seeing students as their component parts (body, mind, spirit), rather than as an integrated whole, supported the emergence of fragmented college systems and structures.

• Typical structure:
  o Academic affairs to cultivate the intellect
  o Student affairs to tend the body, emotions, and spirit.
To support today’s learning outcomes, the focus of education must shift from information transfer to identity development (transformation).

The goals of education must be to produce “intentional learners who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources and continue learning throughout their lives.”

(AAC&U 2002, p. xi)
21st Century Educational Experience

• Transformative learning opportunities through:
  o Service learning programs
  o Learning communities
  o Internships
  o Outdoor education experiences
  o Volunteer programs
  o Action research
  o Capstone courses; and
  o Peer-mentoring
Peer Mentoring

• A mentor is defined as a knowledgeable and experienced guide, a trusted ally and advocate, and a caring role model.

• An effective mentor is respectful, reliable, patient, trustworthy, and a very good listener and communicator.
Due to their close association with other students, Peer Mentors are very important.

Often new students confronted with an academic or personal problem will seek out advice first from a Peer Mentor and only with encouragement will that student contact others in the university, such as counselors, faculty, or administrators.
Peer Mentoring

- The single most important factor associated with high retention and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation college students was their ability to find a mentor at (CSUN informal survey at California State University, Northridge (CSUN)).
- Finding a mentor not only helped students to succeed academically but also with career planning and the development of life management skills such as dealing with personal and family problems.
References

• Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2002), *Greater expectations*. Washington, DC.


• California State University Northridge. The Power of Peer Mentoring.

Peer Mentoring

What’s the peer mentoring program like at LaGuardia?
Who Are We?

- Students
- ePortfolio Consultants
- Peer Mentors
What Do We Do?

- Teach the studio hour
- Act as liaison between faculty and students
- Guide students in designing and developing their ePortfolios
- Act as role models and peer mentors
- Provide instructional and technological support
What is a Studio Hour

- Laboratory class attached to a credit course,
- Facilitated by Peer Mentors like ePortfolio Consultants with close collaboration from faculty and STMs (Student Technology Mentors)
- New initiative: FY Studio Hour
What is the First Year Seminar?

The new FY Studio Hour –

Attached to FY Courses in Business and Technology, Natural Science, Liberal Arts and Health science. Designed to use digital and on-line tools and processes, and advance the success of new LaGuardia students.

Highlight topics that reflect their current intellectual interests and illustrate competency in inquiry, integration, and problem-solving.
KSC Peer Mentors

- Experience as LAGCC student and now as staff
- Technological expertise
- People, leadership and listening skills
- Teaching and facilitation skills
- A helping hand
Teaching and Learning

- Deepen students learning and engagement
- Learn new technology
- Extra help on projects
- Keep students on track
Teaching and Learning

- Develop leadership and management skills
- Gain recognition for our skills and experience
- Sense of fulfillment and personal growth
Finally

- As peer mentors, we make the connection between the lecture and ePortfolio laboratory components of courses with studio hours visible and whole.
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Q&A